

The Manor of Tillingdown: the changing economy of the demesne 1325-71

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Summary

The manorial accounts for Tillingdown 1325-71 provide evidence for changes in management of the demesne in response to the impact of the Black Death.

Introduction

Among the records of the Clare and Stafford families in the Staffordshire County Record Office are eight account rolls for the manor of Tillingdown and one other account roll in the Public Record Office; these constitute the basic raw material for this study.

The nine extant sets of accounts span the period 1325-71; as some years are missing, the accounts do not provide a basis for comprehensive statistical analysis comparable with the Winchester rolls,¹ but they are a detailed source of information for the history of the area at about the time of the Black Death.²

The Black Death reached England in September 1348, arriving first at ports in the south-west. London, being a principal port with many trading connections, was soon affected by the disease which spread quickly through the country. The first onslaught of the plague lasted for about twelve months and then slackened but a second, and perhaps more serious, outbreak occurred in 1361. There have been many studies of the effects of the Black Death in England; they show that the immediate result was an immense loss of life with a probable death rate of between 40 and 50% of the population. The short-term economic effect was a disruption of food supplies and the loss of markets,³ but the long-term effect on the economy appears to have been less devastating than might be expected. Holmes, in his studies of the Clare manors in Suffolk, concludes that the effect of the Black Death on profits was slight and that profit levels quickly recovered although they were subsequently retarded by further outbreaks of disease. He sees the 20 years after the Black Death as a period of difficulty but considers that the worst effects were short-lived.⁴ Similarly Bridbury, in his study of the economic effects of the Black Death, describes a situation in which labour shortages, high wages and high prices led to a 'buoyant economy',⁵ and Dyer refers to the years after the Black Death as an 'Indian Summer' or false dawn for landlords, as prices and rents remained high against all expectations.⁶ Such a fluctuating situation led to the introduction of new farming practices - some succeeded, some failed; but the chief stimulus to change appears to have been the Black Death, which caused manorial officials to devise new strategies to cope with the problems. I have attempted to present the historical development of Tillingdown and to analyse the account rolls to discover the extent of change in the years following the Black Death.

Topography

Tillingdown is situated on the North Downs about 12km south of Croydon. The farmland ranges from 110m to 236m above sea level and the house stands at 195m. Four km to the east, the chalk of the Downs forms an outcrop at its highest point in the area near Botley hill, where the height is 267m above sea level. Virtually the same area as the medieval manor is now occupied by Tillingdown Farm (OS Grid Reference: TQ 348 555). In 1761



Fig 1. Tillingdown Farm 1990 (photograph Derek Jones)

an estate map was made for the Clayton family who acquired the manor in 1672; the map shows the farm-house at Tillingdown and the extent of the manor which then covered between 500 and 600 acres. The house and yard are situated on a clay plateau not far from the line of the London to Brighton Roman road, which forms the eastern boundary of the manor. (fig 4) The house shown on the map still exists; it is brick-built of early 18th century date and the farm-yard contains a number of flint buildings which have been patched and repaired over the years. Although it is difficult to judge the extent of the survival of any pre-18th century buildings, the present house is likely to be either on or near the site of the medieval house, since neither air photography, nor field-walking nor documentary research has revealed evidence of an alternative occupation site. (fig 1)

In 1990 the land is used entirely for pasture but otherwise the medieval landscape appears to have survived almost intact, the main exception being where the Caterham bypass, constructed in 1939, occupies a deep cutting through the farmland. Tillingdown farm-house is, however, still connected by footbridge with the detached part of its land (fig 2). Until 1910, Tillingdown was a detached part of the parish of Tandridge and was then incorporated into Caterham parish which adjoins it on the eastern side (fig 2).

GEOLOGY

The influence of geology in determining the pattern of settlement can be seen at Tillingdown where the land consists of areas of clay-with-flints, suitable for cereal crops, and chalk downland which is suitable for pasture.⁷ Close to the southern boundary of Tillingdown,

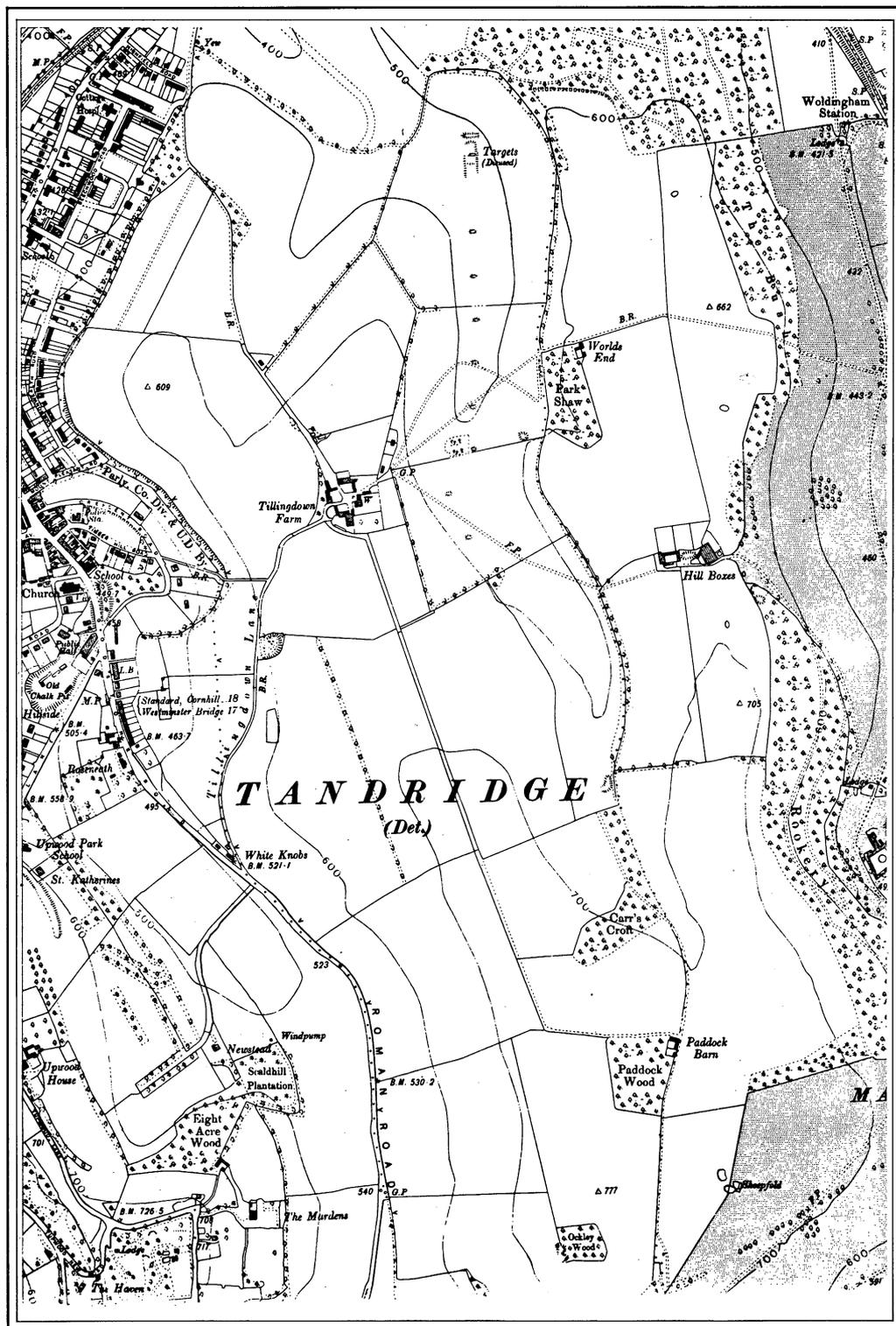


Fig 2. Extract from the OS six-inch plan Surrey sheet XXVII.NE, 1914 edition, showing the location of Tillingdown

at the foot of the chalk escarpment, the upper greensand was formerly mined for building stone. The dip slope of the chalk is trenched with steep-sided dry valleys where the occasional bourne flow provides an unreliable source of water.

WATER SUPPLY

The water supply for the manor probably came from small ponds since the annual rainfall of about 51cm is one of the highest in the area because of the elevation, and so compensates for the lack of spring water.⁸ Because of the unreliability of the water supply, small ponds were formerly made in the clay-with-flints to supply domestic needs and, being situated near the farm buildings, they received the water from the roofs. Trees planted around the southern margins of the ponds helped to preserve the water from excessive evaporation.

VEGETATION

The Crop Returns of 1801 do not cover Tandridge and Tillingdown but they are given for the adjoining parish of Caterham which has a similar geological structure. In Caterham, oats provided the main crop (243 acres), followed by wheat (221 acres) and barley (142 acres). This contrasts with the general pattern in Surrey, where wheat formed the largest cereal crop, except on clay, where oats predominated since oats could tolerate the damp, heavy soils of clay lands. In 1801 oats were grown chiefly for use as fodder.⁹ The chalk downland which has no clay capping supports a different type of vegetation; brome-grass and vetch are the characteristic species, both of which provide good pasture.

History of the Manor

EARLY HISTORY

The London to Brighton Roman road forms the eastern boundary of Tillingdown and, until the early years of this century, the Caterham-Tandridge parish boundary followed the line of the road which is still visible, running as a terrace along the side of a steep-sided valley.¹⁰

The earliest documentary evidence for Tillingdown comes from the Domesday Survey which states that Alnoth held the manor of Tillingdown before 1066 and that in 1086 it was held by the wife of Salie from Richard de Clare. At that time the manor contained land for four ploughs with two ploughs in demesne, four and a half plough-teams and an accountable population of five villeins and eight slaves. There was a church and woodland pasture for 30 pigs.¹¹ Domesday also gives us the earliest known form of the place-name of Tillingdown viz: *Tellingedone*, for which the Surrey volume of the English Place-names Society suggests a derivation from a personal name ie 'the hill of Tilli's people'.¹² Smith, in his discussion of English place-name elements, states that it is impossible to distinguish whether the name derives from the Old English personal name *Tila* or from *til* an Old English adjective meaning 'good or useful'.¹³ Both explanations indicate a possible Saxon settlement at Tillingdown.

As the wife of Salie held the two manors of Tillingdown and Tandridge in 1086, the Victoria County History suggests that the manors probably descended together because, in the middle of the 13th century, both were held by Thomas de Warblington from the Clares.¹⁴ An enquiry describes the manor of Tillingdown at the time when it was held by Warblington as consisting of a capital messuage and a curtilage, 300 acres of arable, 200 acres of pasture and 60 acres of thorn thicket.¹⁵ At the end of the 13th century the *inquisitio post mortem* for Gilbert de Clare states that Tillingdown contained 400 acres of arable, 20 acres of thorns and ten acres of pasture.¹⁶ In 1307, on the death of Joan, widow of Gilbert de Clare, Tillingdown consisted of a capital messuage and 220 acres of arable. When their

son Gilbert de Clare died in 1314, the inquisition recorded his property at Tillingdown as a capital messuage, 200 acres of arable and twelve acres of woodland, held of the manor of Bletchingley.¹⁷

In 1317 Tillingdown was among the Clare lands which were divided between Gilbert's three sisters; Margaret, his second sister, received a third of the inheritance which included all the properties in Kent and Surrey within the receivership of Tonbridge. She inherited the following in Surrey: the manor and borough of Bletchingley, the manors of Chipstead, Effingham, Ockham, Tillingdown, Titsey and Woldingham, and tenements in Camberwell.¹⁸

Margaret was married to Hugh Audley, a knight of the royal household and a close friend of Edward II. Their daughter, also called Margaret, married Ralph, Lord Stafford, and, on the death of Audley, his wife's property in Kent and Surrey passed to the Staffords. The inquisition after the death of Audley recorded that, in the parish of Tandridge, 'tenements called Tyllynge' were handed over to Ralph and Margaret Stafford.¹⁹ In 1351 Ralph Stafford was created Earl of Stafford for his services to Edward III in France during the Hundred Years War.²⁰ In the 14th century, Tillingdown was a demesne manor supplying its own needs and sending supplies to the nearby manor-house of Bletchingley. It also became the administrative centre of a small group of dependent manors or estates called Caterham, Hallingbury, Marden, Portley and Woldingham which were all situated close to Tillingdown; the location of Hallingbury has not been identified, but it formed part of Caterham. At various times these areas were incorporated into Tillingdown and then hived off, according to economic needs.

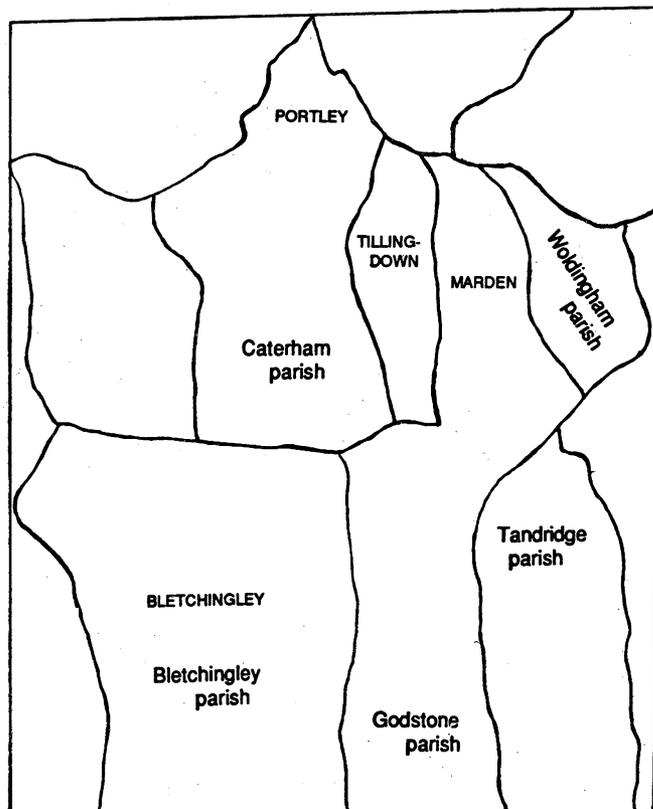


Fig 3. Stafford manors in East Surrey 1350-71

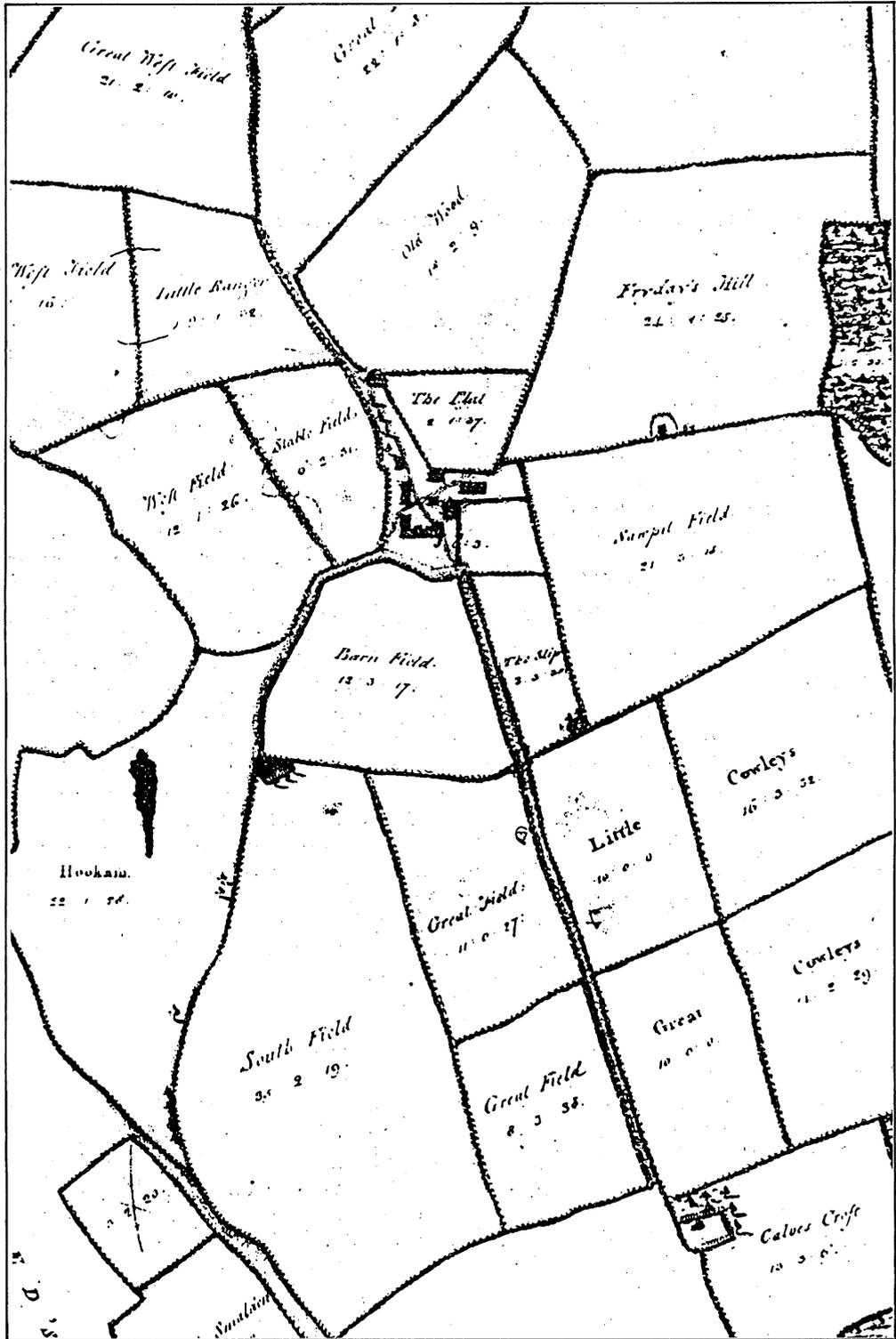


Fig 4. Clayton estate map showing the farm buildings and field layout in 1761

LATER HISTORY

Tillingdown was held until 1521 by the Earls of Stafford, who later became Dukes of Buckingham. The descent of the manor is closely linked with the manor of Bletchingley and, in 1672, Tillingdown, with Bletchingley and Marden, was acquired by Sir Robert Clayton. Clayton did not rebuild the partly-demolished manor-house at Bletchingley but replaced it with a splendid mansion set in parkland at Marden.

Sources for the history of the Manor of Tillingdown 1325-71

ADMINISTRATION

The manor of Bletchingley and the associated manors of Caterham, Chelsham, Chipstead, Farleigh, Tillingdown and Woldingham formed part of the lands in Surrey allocated to Richard de Clare after the conquest. There are no known records of estate administration for the two hundred years after Domesday but it is possible that this group of manors in East Surrey was administered from Bletchingley where the Clares built a castle at the end of the 11th century. At some stage during the 13th century the administration of the Clare lands in East Surrey was placed under the control of officials at Tonbridge Castle in Kent and, by the end of the 13th century, the administration of all the Clare manors in Kent, Surrey and Sussex had been centralised at Tonbridge.²¹

To manage their household and estates the Clares employed a salaried administrative staff. The financial side in particular was very carefully managed; only the main features of the administration are known but they were probably derived from the system used in the royal household. During the 12th century, the chamber, headed by the chamberlain, was the chief financial office in the royal administration, but in the late 13th century its function was taken over by the wardrobe. Similarly, the Clare finances were managed by wardrobe officials.²² The wardrobe, who was also known as the receiver-general, supervised all financial transactions using a highly developed system of accounts and receipts, with a yearly audit to enable him to keep close control over the workings of the household. By the middle of the 13th century the technique of compiling accounts was in general use on large estates and was applied to individual manors.²³ The wardrobe account of Gilbert de Clare for 1307-08 is the earliest estate document in the collection at the Staffordshire County Record Office. However, it provides only a summary of the income from the Clare estates and lists the earl's expenses. The combined income from estates in Kent, Surrey and Sussex amounted to just over £500 for the year, which is larger than the income from the other receiverships.²⁴ The estate records from which the summary was derived do not appear to have survived but it seems likely that the accounting system that was set up to control the Clare household continued in use under the administration of the Audleys and the Staffords.

RECORDS

The earliest surviving estate accounts for Tillingdown and Bletchingley date from 1325-6 and are part of the royal accounts in the Public Record Office, as at that time Audley's lands had been taken over by the king.²⁵ The Tillingdown accounts for the period 1350-71 are held at the Staffordshire County Record Office, catalogued under the heading D641. Annual accounts running from Michaelmas to Michaelmas were compiled by estate bailiffs for presentation to the local receivers who, in turn, submitted their accounts to auditors for checking. Ultimately, the accounts from each receivership were presented to the receiver-general. In the case of Tillingdown, the bailiffs were generally based in Bletchingley and the receivers were at Tonbridge. The account for each year lists arrears, receipts and expenses for the manor. Calculations were based on the yields of grain and stock which were converted into money values as income, and the expenses were deducted from them.

Expenses included sums of money spent on the upkeep of buildings, wages and expenses of officials, hay for the animals and repairs to equipment. The area covered by the Tillingdown accounts changed throughout the period, when land was bought or sold in response to economic pressures, as shown in Table 1. When it became uneconomic for landlords to run their manors directly, using their own labour force, they began leasing manors to individuals who paid a lump sum annually, relieving landlords of the day-to-day running costs and taking the profits. Table 1, which also gives the names of the estate bailiffs, shows this transition, with John Marden, the last bailiff, taking over the running of the manor as a lease-holder. Understandably, the accounts kept by individual lease-holders were usually less detailed than the accounts of estate bailiffs, which had to be submitted to audit.

<i>Manors</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Bailiff</i>
Tillingdown	1326	Henry Cobham (receiver to the king)
Tillingdown and Woldingham	1350	William Eilwyne
Tillingdown, Woldingham and Marden	1352	William Bourne
Tillingdown, Portley and Marden	1358	William Henry
Tillingdown, Portley and Marden	1362	William Henry
Tillingdown and Portley	1364	William Nightingale
Tillingdown, Portley, Hallingbury and Caterham	1366	John Marden
Tillingdown and Portley	1367	John Marden (lessee)
Tillingdown	1371	John Marden (lessee)

(Hallingbury was part of Caterham but its exact location is unknown.)

TABLE 1: area covered by the Tillingdown accounts.

The following extract shows the principles of account-keeping. It is part of the royal accounts, dating from 1325-6 when Edward II held the manor. The form of the accounts remained the same under the Staffords.

Tillingdown. The Account of Henry Cobham, Keeper of various manors in Kent, Surrey and Sussex.

Income:

Sale of pasture: £2 11s 5d
 Sale of corn and stock: £10 19s 0d
 Sum total received: £13 9s 5d

Expenses:

Costs of ploughs: 12s 7d
 Purchase of corn: £2 11s 10d
 Purchase of stock: £2 1s 0d
 Minor expenses: 5s 8d
 Costs of building: 1s 1d
 Threshing and winnowing: 8s 8d
 Weeding, mowing and harvesting: £1 4s 7d

The records of grain and animals were usually written on the back of the roll. Accounts of this type were in common use on large estates, enabling the officials to make a rapid assessment of income and expenses.

The Court-House at Tillingdown and its associated buildings

Analysis of the accounts shows a series of building works and repairs to the chief house and its outbuildings between 1326 and 1371. The earliest reference to a chief house dates

from about the mid-13th century when Thomas de Warblington held a 'capital message with a curtilage' at Tillingdown. The chief house was also mentioned in 1307 on the death of Joan de Clare. References to sessions of the manor court held at Tillingdown are further evidence for the presence of a chief house or court-house, although the court rolls have not survived.

Various agricultural buildings associated with the court-house are described in the accounts; in 1326 these include a cattle-shed and a corn grange, both with thatched roofs, and a gate or gate-house, implying that the buildings were set within an enclosed yard or curtilage. Other outbuildings are described in the accounts for 1350, including a dovecote and another cattle-shed which was bought in Caterham, dismantled and transferred to Tillingdown. Payment details show that it was made of wattle and daub and it had three doors. Seven wagon loads of straw were needed for thatch and the building had to be large enough to house eighteen animals. In 1358, investment in buildings reached its peak and the accounts record payments for tiling the roof of one of the cattle-sheds, for adding two doors to another to make a stable at one end, and for dismantling two buildings at Birleston and making them into one at Tillingdown; this building contained the new granary and apartments for the bailiff.²⁶ At Portley about 3km away, an old kitchen was demolished and transported to Tillingdown where the materials were re-used to form a *skelyng*, which may have been a lean-to building, at the 'north end of the top of the grange'. The *skelyng* was made of timber with a tiled roof.²⁷ In the same year an upper room, perhaps part of the bailiff's apartments, was constructed using wattle and daub to replace wooden planks. The room was protected with three door hinges and three locks and it is possible that, at this date, an upper floor was inserted into the hall that had previously been open to the roof.

In 1362 the sequence of repairs and alterations continued – the grange was tiled, one of the cattle-sheds was re-thatched and 40 roof beams were bought in Bletchingley for another cattle-shed. A building was dismantled in Tandridge and brought to Tillingdown where it was reconstructed and lengthened by the addition of sixteen roof beams of 'old timber' from other buildings within the manor that had been demolished by a storm. In 1364 the walls of one of the cattle-sheds were repaired with wattle and daub, the ruined grange was repaired and a room was made in the cattle-shed to store supplies. The account for 1366 does not record any building work but it shows that the court-house (*curia*) was still in use, since it refers to the provision of food for the manorial servants who were 'guarding the court-house'.

Clearly, investment in buildings was a management policy; most of the money was spent on agricultural buildings, principally for storage, indicating that storage of grain was a strategy for coping with shortages and bad harvests. The dismantling and re-erection of

<i>Manors</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Labourers</i>	<i>Acres</i>
Tillingdown	1326	3	67.5
Tillingdown and Woldingham	1350	4	39
Tillingdown, Woldingham and Marden	1352	11	149
Tillingdown, Portley and Marden	1358	15	235
Tillingdown, Portley and Marden	1362	9	132
Tillingdown and Portley	1364	8	126
Tillingdown, Portley, Hallingbury and Caterham	1366	11	120 +
Tillingdown and Portley	1367	(not recorded)	
Tillingdown	1371	7	130

TABLE 2: number of full-time labourers compared with the extent of the arable.

buildings suggests that there were redundant buildings available in the vicinity which were re-used to provide extra storage capacity at Tillingdown. Very little money was spent on the court-house itself, the main expenditure occurring in 1358 when the bailiff was in residence and when the productivity level of the manors was at its highest.

Crops

The crops produced in the manors were wheat, barley, oats, sprigg (a mixture of wheat and oats), dredge or drancke (a mixture of barley and oats), haras (a type of pulse grown for animal feed), peas, beans and vetch. The accounts also recorded poor quality grain which was separated from the better quality product. The overall pattern of crop production in Tillingdown shows that in 1326, 67.5 acres were under cultivation, with almost equal amounts of wheat and oats being produced, the wheat being grown for sale and the oats for fodder (fig 5). In 1350, after the Black Death, the total dropped to 12 acres, but in

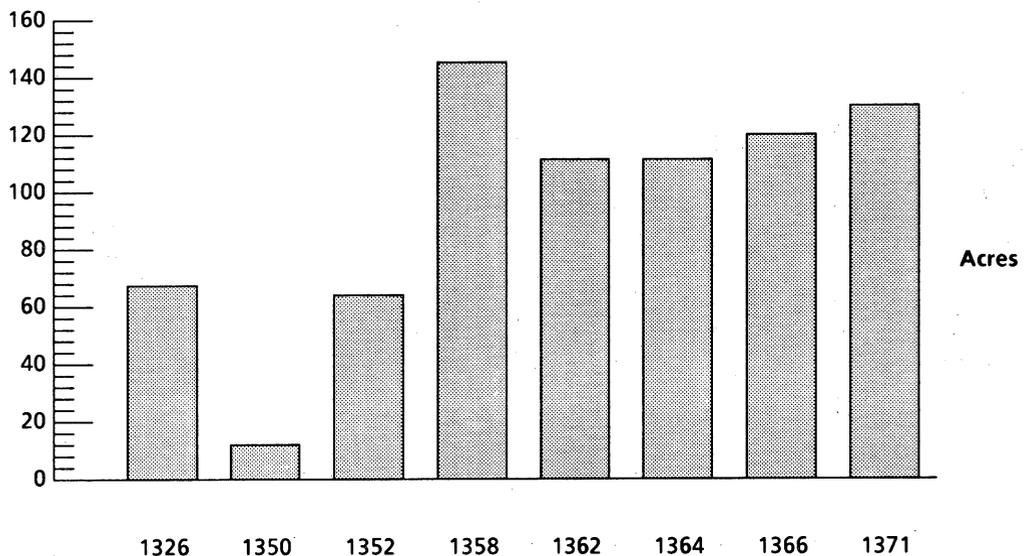


Fig 5. Tillingdown: acres to be sown

1352 it quickly recovered to 64 acres, and by 1358 cultivation was at its greatest extent - 145 acres. By 1362, perhaps as a result of a second outbreak of the Black Death, the area under cultivation had dropped to 111.5 acres and this was probably about the same in 1364. The account for 1366 indicates a slight rise in the arable to about 120 acres. 1367 is marked by the introduction of a leasing system for a guaranteed annual sum and, in 1371, the lessee rendered an account for 130 acres with oats and sprigg forming the main crop. The chief uses of the crop were for seed and for feeding the animals and labourers - only a small amount of wheat was generally available for sale. At various times the manors of Woldingham, Portley, Marden, Hallingbury and Caterham were added to Tillingdown and crops were grown in these areas. Table 2 shows the dates at which the other manors were included and the total acreage under cultivation. By comparing this with the acreage shown in fig 5 we can see that the arable was mainly concentrated at Tillingdown.

I have used the changes in the price of a bushel of wheat as an indication of general price movements (fig 6). There are, however, difficulties in drawing conclusions since the accounts sometimes recorded the price of wheat bought and sometimes of wheat sold – depending on whether there was a surplus or a shortage. In 1326, when there was a surplus, wheat was sold at 15d per bushel; in 1350, when none was produced, it was bought at the price of 10d per bushel to be used as payment for services. In 1352 wheat was bought for seed at the increased price of 15d per bushel; in 1358 there was a surplus and it was sold at 12d per bushel – the account refers to ‘losses made on his lordship’s corn’. In 1362 the price continued to fall and it was sold at 10d per bushel, the same price as in 1350, showing the effect of the second outbreak of disease. In 1364 the price rose to 15d but two years later fell back to a purchase price of 10d and in 1371 wheat was sold at 12d.

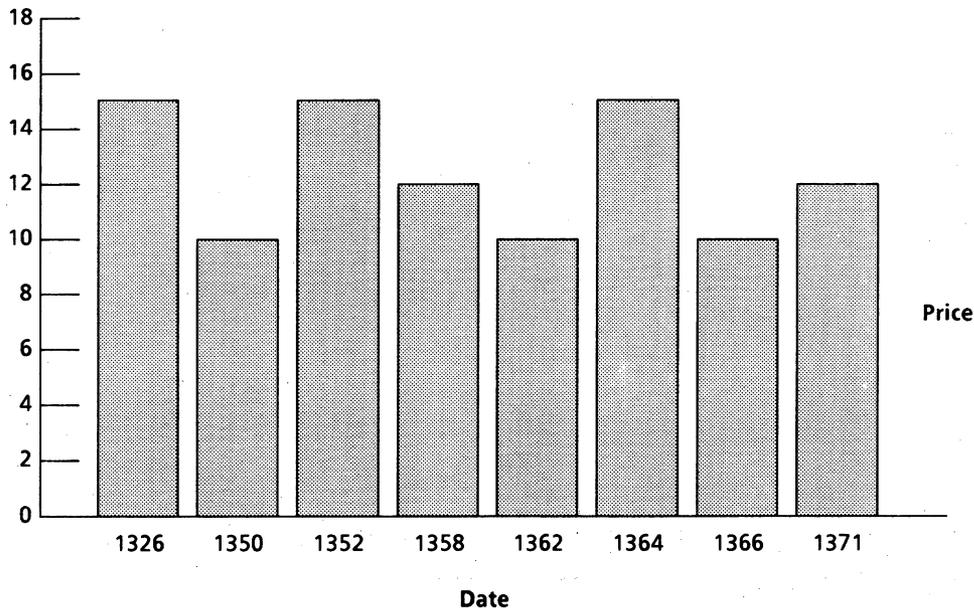


Fig 6. Tillingdown: price of wheat (pence per bushel)

It is impossible to calculate the price for the missing years; however, comparison with the Phelps Brown Index of consumables shows agreement with the general pattern for the years 1326-58, but the fluctuations in the price of wheat at Tillingdown in the years 1362-66 do not agree with the index.²⁸ The index is based on the average price of cereals, principally wheat, in southern England, and it shows that in the years between 1360 and 1370 prices rose and fell, but they did not fall back to the levels of 1350, as they did at Tillingdown. It is possible that the fall in price in 1362 followed by the sharp rise in 1364 and the equally sharp fall in 1366 are the result of local events. It is likely that such fluctuations in prices and the uncertainty of the yield caused the landlord to withdraw from direct farming and move towards leasing out the land.

Animals

The accounts for animals relate to the total area of the manors of Tillingdown, Marden, Portley, Woldingham, Hallingbury and Caterham.

The draught animals were based at Tillingdown but they worked on the other manors as required; their numbers followed the overall trend of increase and decrease in the number of acres under cultivation, showing that the production of grain for fodder was an important factor in the economy of the demesne (fig 7). Oxen were generally used as draught animals with the number varying between four and 34; horses were also used but in smaller numbers. There was an exception to this in 1326 when there were six horses and four oxen but this can be explained by the reference to the sale of three oxen that year 'because they were too old and weak for ploughing'.

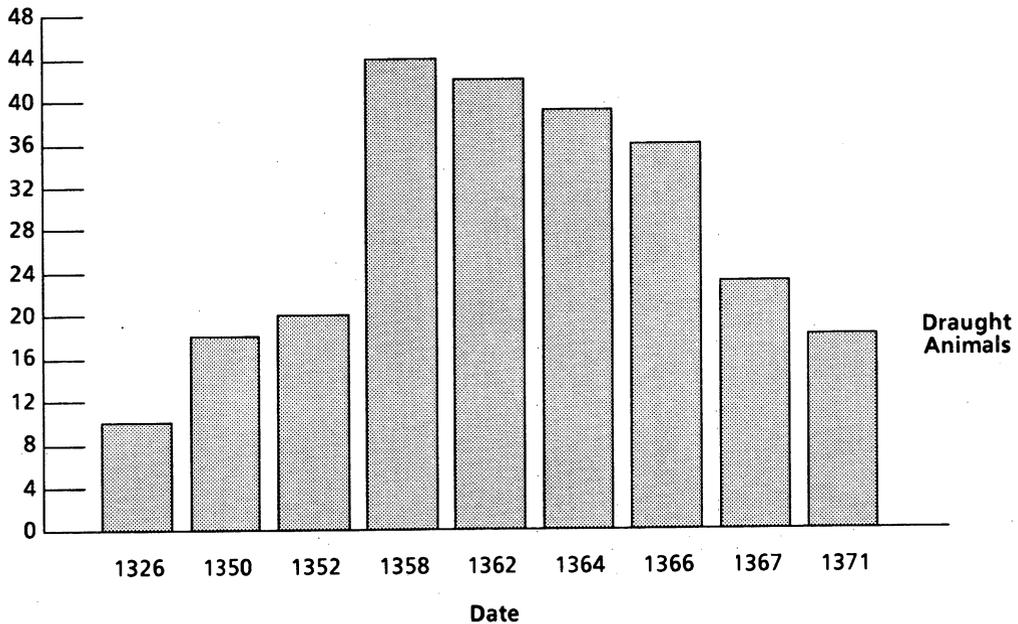


Fig 7. Tillingdown: number of draught animals

By 1350 the number had increased to eighteen which suggests that there may have been a policy to expand the amount of arable but that this planned expansion was cut short by the effects of the Black Death. In 1352 the number of animals had increased to 20 for 149 acres and, in 1358, when the manors were at their greatest extent, there were 44 draught animals which is the highest number recorded in the accounts. From then on, the numbers of draught animals gradually declined, reflecting the decline in the number of acres under cultivation. In 1362, when one of the horses died, the account records his name - he was called *Brok* - he was probably an old favourite since he was the only animal to be named. The sharp decrease in the number of draught animals in 1364 to 24 can be explained by the reference to the theft of fifteen oxen that year. In 1367 there were eighteen oxen and five horses, and in 1371 when the manor was leased to John Marden, the horses were sold, leaving eighteen oxen at Tillingdown to work the arable.

The pattern of cattle-farming followed the general trend of expansion and contraction of the arable but with much greater fluctuations in numbers (fig 8). In 1326 there were no cattle; by 1350, there were thirteen but they were all sold that year, suggesting that perhaps there had been a plan to take up dairy-farming but that it was abandoned. By 1358 there appears to have been a deliberate policy of investment in dairy-farming since there was a herd of 28 cows and a bull, with a dairyman to look after them, and extensive building

work was carried out on the cattle-sheds at Marden, Portley and Tillingdown. In 1362 the number had increased to two bulls and 34 cows and the herd reached its largest extent, but it appears to have been affected by disease and 25 cows were sold 'because they were weak and ailing'. After that date, dairy-farming seems to have been abandoned – possibly this attempt at diversification into pastoral farming to spread the risk of bad harvests was brought to an end by an outbreak of cattle disease. There were 26 steers within the manors in 1366 but after that date no cattle were recorded.

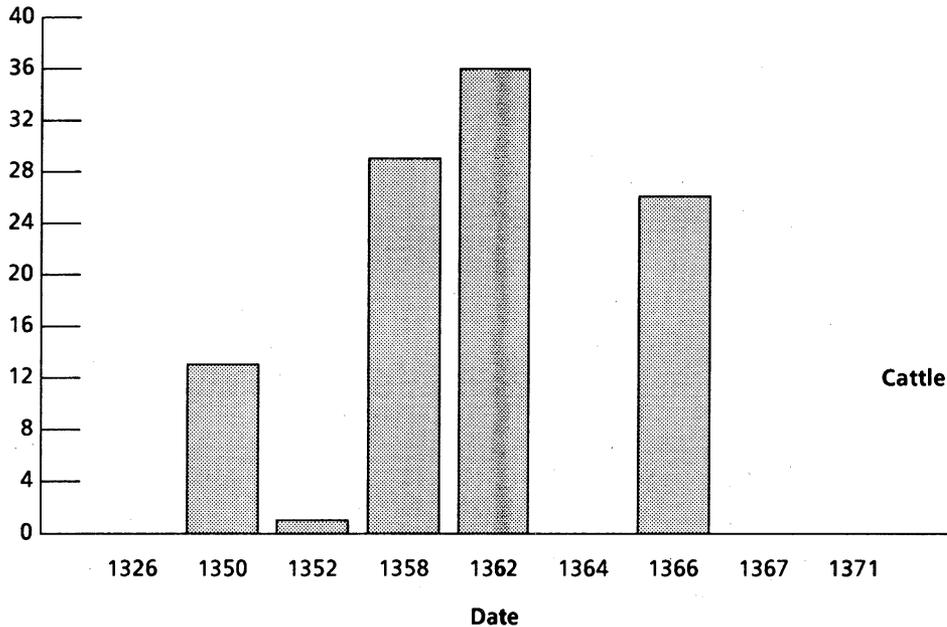


Fig 8. Tillingdown: number of cattle

In 1326 there were no sheep mentioned in the accounts nor were there any references to shepherds or sheep-folds but by 1350 there were 322 sheep and lambs; most of them were brought from the other Stafford manors of Bletchingley and Brasted (in Kent) which suggests that this may have been the beginning of sheep-farming at Tillingdown and its associated manors. At first the sheep were kept at Woldingham, the 1350 account mentioning hurdles being taken there from the manor of Chipstead for the sheep-fold, and the lambs being weaned there, but this venture into sheep-farming in 1350 was only partially successful because almost a third of the flock died. In England during the first half of the 14th century there were severe epidemics of sheep scab which reduced the size of the sheep population. The disease weakened the sheep and affected the quality of the wool; as a result of the spread of the disease, remedies were devised to protect the sheep against infection. A salve, made of tar, grease, and butter was applied to the sheep in the autumn after shearing – it helped to waterproof the wool and to keep out the parasites that caused the disease. The account for 1350 records payment for salve, '4 gallons of tar, 5 gallons of white grease and butter for making salve for the sheep – 5s 8d'. After 1350 the size of the flock increased and the costs of the salve increased correspondingly. The use of salve probably reduced the level of disease but it also had a damaging effect on the quality of the wool and had to be washed off before the sheep were sheared. The task of washing and shearing was generally carried out by women who were taken on for seasonal

employment and, after shearing, the sheep were branded with the letter 'S' which was presumably S for Stafford.

Sheep-farming may have been introduced in 1350 in an attempt to counter the effects of a bad harvest; the result that year was poor but, after 1350, the size of the flock increased, rams were brought in for breeding and a flock of about 1100 sheep was maintained for the remaining years of the accounts, although there was a set-back in 1362 when the flock rose to its highest number - 1701 - and almost a fifth of the sheep died. The increase in the number of sheep in 1352 coincides with the addition of the manor of Marden to the accounts and, as only 20 acres of Marden were used as arable, sheep were probably pastured on much of the remaining land. Similarly the manors of Woldingham and Portley had relatively little arable and the areas of chalk downland were probably used for pasture. Much of the area is still used for sheep pasture at the present day and the farmer's wife declares that "the lambs thrive at Marden".

A few pigs were kept in 1350-2 but clearly they were not a significant element in the overall economy of the manors as far as the landlord was concerned although some income was generated by selling to tenants the right to feed their pigs on the stubble after the harvest.

It appears that a venture into rabbit-farming was another attempt at diversification. Rabbits were first mentioned in 1358 when John Heghelond was named as the warrener at Marden and their introduction seems to have been successful since 36 rabbits were sold at 3d each, but there was probably no steady market for such luxuries and in 1362 only 24 were sold with the comment that "there was no more [income] this year because of the lack of buyers". After 1362 there are no references to rabbits.

These moves into pastoral farming did not occur at the expense of the arable; on the contrary, the amount of land used for pasture and arable increased and decreased at the same time. The actual size of the pasture is not known but it seems reasonable to assume that it increased because of the increase in the number of animals. The extra land may have been obtained by taking over the associated manors, since they contained relatively small amounts of arable, and by grazing animals on the increased amounts of land left fallow after the harvest. The quality of the soil in the arable fields would have been improved at the same time through manuring.

The workforce

The accounts show that the permanent workforce was centered at Tillingdown from where workers were assigned to tasks in the adjoining manors as the need arose. The size of the workforce and the rates of pay were subject to market forces of supply and demand, showing a flexible approach to management of the demesne since extra workers were hired in periods of expansion and numbers were reduced when demand fell. It is clear, however, that fluctuations in the supply and demand of both food and labour caused problems in managing the demesne (fig 9). The workers of the manors consisted of two main groups: a) full-time manorial servants, b) labourers and craftsmen hired for specific tasks. In addition, a relatively small amount of work was done by customary tenants who held land in return for service on the lord's land.

MANORIAL SERVANTS

Postan, in his study of the *famulus* or estate worker on the demesne, lists the typical manorial servants as: ploughmen, a carter who also worked as a harrower, a dairy man or woman, a shepherd, a cowherd and a female servant, all working under the supervision of a reeve or bailiff.²⁹ The same general pattern can be seen at Tillingdown where the estate

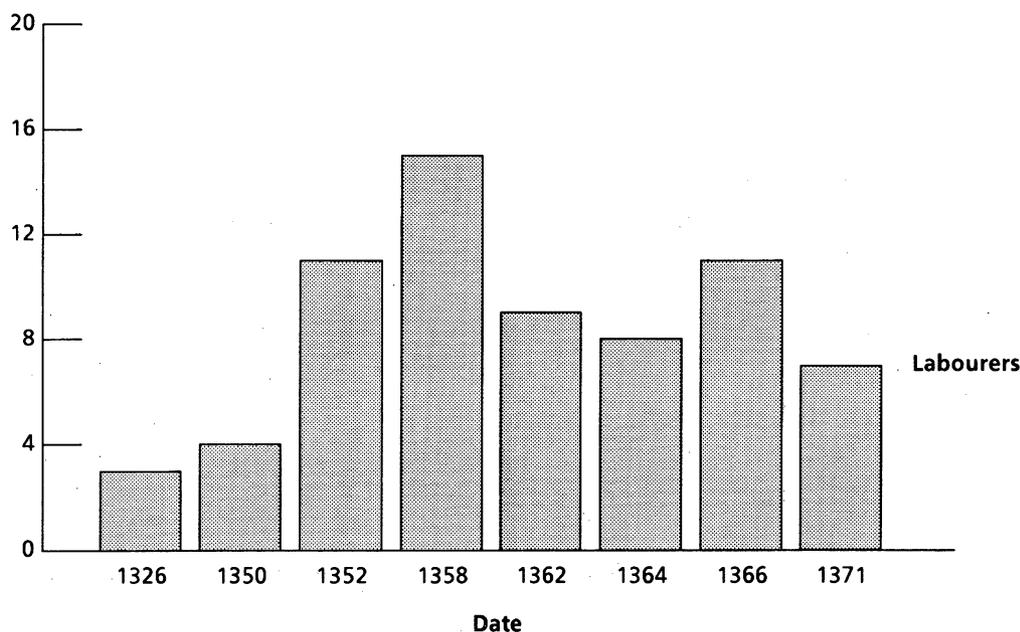


Fig 9. Tillingdown: number of full-time labourers

workers were supervised by a bailiff who was a full-time salaried official of the Audley and Stafford households. He may have lived in the court-house at Tillingdown since the accounts of 1358 refer to building work being carried out in the bailiff's apartments there, indicating that William Henry, the bailiff, was residing there at the time when both the size of the workforce and the level of productivity were at their greatest. In 1358 William Henry had another full-time official to help him to run the manors when John Heghelond was employed as granger, warrener and reap-reeve at the same salary as the bailiff.

The salaried officials supervised the full-time workers; there were usually several ploughmen, a carter who was also the harrower, the labourers who looked after the animals, ie the cowherds, shepherds and a dairyman, and a servant girl who prepared their food. These formed the nucleus of the workforce and they probably lived in or near the court-house since the presence of a girl to prepare their food suggests that they had some central meeting point for their meals. They may also have had small-holdings within the manors since in 1350, when grain was in short supply, the account refers to poor quality grain being purchased from them.

In 1326 the permanent workforce consisted of two ploughmen and a boy harrower; by 1350, although the acreage of the manors had greatly increased by the addition of Woldingham, there were only four full-time workers presumably because of the effects of the Black Death (Table 2). In 1352 the number had increased to four ploughmen, three shepherds, one carter and harrower, and a boy; they were paid in both cash and allowances of grain, but there was a smaller allowance of grain for the 'inferior labourers'. The account for 1358 enables us to identify the two groups, as three of the ploughmen, called the 'plough-holders', received a larger allowance of grain than other workers and all the other workers were classed as 'inferior'. In 1358, when production levels were highest, there were fifteen full-time workers on the manors but there is no indication of the source of these extra people and their numbers were soon reduced, perhaps by a further outbreak of disease. In 1364 there were only eight full-time workers and extra men had to be hired

for special tasks. Two ploughmen and an extra plough were hired 'to speed up the sowing' and six men were summoned with their ploughs to do boon work, suggesting that labour shortages caused the bailiff to enforce customary work services which had been previously commuted to rent. By 1364 Tillingdown ceased to have its own separate bailiff and William Nightingale, the bailiff of Bletchingley, was responsible for Tillingdown and the associated manors. Perhaps because of the shortage of workers, Nightingale, with the help of a boy, took on the duties of reap-reeve at Tillingdown for no extra pay. In 1366 the manpower problems may have been solved as there are no more references to shortages and there were twelve permanent labourers for the manors. In 1371, when the account relates only to Tillingdown, the workforce consisted of four ploughmen, one shepherd and a harrower. This compares with a work force of just two ploughmen and a boy at Tillingdown in 1326.

In addition to the full-time workers, labourers were hired for specific tasks, as at harvest-time when men and women were hired for reaping, binding, threshing and winnowing, and at other times for weeding and mowing. Women were also hired for washing and shearing the sheep and rolling up the fleeces.

CRAFTSMEN

Craftsmen were hired to carry out non-agricultural work; most of them were associated with the building trade, working as carpenters, thatchers, tilers and masons. They were hired for specific tasks and usually worked for a few days 'according to contract' for which they were paid at a daily rate.

Most of the contracts lasted for between one and seven days, but in 1362 there were two contracts which were exceptionally long, perhaps to deal with exceptional circumstances. John Gantron, the tiler, who is the only craftsman named in the accounts, worked with his assistant on tiling the grange at Tillingdown for 21 days and, in the same year, three carpenters were hired for 46 days to dismantle a cattle-shed and rebuild it at Tillingdown, using materials from other buildings in the manor that had been 'blown down by the wind', so possibly the extra work was necessary to cope with emergency conditions. Suitable building materials were available locally - stone was worked in the quarries at Bletchingley, sand and clay occur in the same area, lime was obtained from local chalk, timber was supplied from the deer parks at Bletchingley and withies were cut at Chipstead.

The only craftsman with an annual contract was the blacksmith who was contracted to make shoes for the horses and oxen and to repair the ploughs and wagons. It is possible that in 1326 he had a smithy at Tillingdown since the account refers to the purchase of iron and steel for the foundry. In the years 1350-71 he had a smithy in Caterham and was described as the 'blacksmith of Caterham'.

CUSTOMARY TENANTS

As we have seen, most of the work on the demesne land at Tillingdown and the associated manors was carried out by full-time workers, but there are references in the accounts to customary tenants who did labour service or paid rent as a condition of their tenancy. Matters affecting tenants were normally dealt with at the manor court and decisions of the court were recorded in the court rolls, but no court rolls for Tillingdown have survived. There are no references to meetings of the manor court in 1326 and perhaps at this date the manor was run entirely as a demesne; in contrast, Bletchingley which was also a demesne manor, had a large number of customary tenants at the time. By 1350 customary tenancies existed at Tillingdown - possibly as a means of obtaining labour. The manor court was held twice in 1350 and the tenants paid 6s 4d in fines.³⁰ A note written in the margin of the account roll states that the court rolls for that year were missing. When the court was held in 1352, the accounts recorded losses of rent from tenements which were then vacant and in 1358 the account shows the effect of manpower shortages - under the

heading 'Costs of Harvesting' there is a note that payment was made to workers and various men 'because no-one is obliged to work there by tenure of his land', indicating that in more normal times help with the harvest was a customary service but that by 1358, the services could no longer be enforced and that cash payment was demanded for the work.

In 1362 the situation had changed again since the manor of Portley had no tenant. However, in 1364 because of the labour shortage, there was an attempt to enforce customary labour at Tillingdown by summoning six men with their ploughs to do boon work. The general shortage of tenants is also shown by the lack of income from pasture rights but by 1366 numbers had increased again and the estate officials made the decision to lease parts of the demesne to tenants for an annual payment which would not include labour services.

We can see from the accounts that the customary tenants caused problems in the management of the demesne; in a situation where labour was in short supply, the tenants who owed labour services were in a strong position since they could either withhold their labour and take up vacant land elsewhere or demand payment for their work. The customary tenants at Tillingdown apparently took advantage of the situation and followed both courses of action; some demanded pay for harvesting, which they had previously done without pay, and others left the customary land vacant and took land elsewhere. In an effort to recoup some of the losses, parts of the demesne were leased out.

So although the customary tenants caused organisational problems, it was probably easier to organise the economy in a demesne manor like Tillingdown, with a nucleus of full-time workers, than in manors that were dependent to a much larger extent on customary labour.

WAGES

It is difficult to assess the rates of pay within the manors as some workers were paid in produce, others in cash, and some in a combination of both. It is, however, possible to discern general trends in wages which relate to the shortage of labour.

In 1326 the bailiff of Tillingdown received 1d per day in an annual contract; by 1350 he was receiving 2d per day and 10s per year as a livery allowance, but his responsibilities had increased and he was managing Woldingham as well. The only other official to receive an annual salary was John Heghelond who was employed as warrener, granger and reapeeve in 1358 at the rate of 2d per day. The wages of the manorial servants varied according to the time of year, eg in 1326 the two ploughmen received a cash payment of 3s for the time between Midsummer and Michaelmas, when their work was most intensive. In addition, they received a food allowance of just over one bushel of corn per week throughout the whole year. In 1350 the ploughmen received the same wage of 3s but their food allowance was reduced to one bushel per week 'according to the custom this year' and it was further reduced to less than one bushel per week 'according to the new statute issued by the king', showing the effect of the legislation of Edward III in an attempt to stabilise wages and prices after the devastation and shortages caused by the Black Death.³¹ The Ordinance of Labourers which was issued in 1349 banned landlords from offering wages above the customary or pre-plague levels, and at Tillingdown the food allowance to the labourers was reduced to comply with the new legislation but the shortage of corn forced the bailiff to purchase poor quality grain from the manorial servants in order to be able to supply them with their allowance, which, in effect, increased their wages. By 1352 the shortage of labour caused wages to rise despite legislation; the senior ploughmen received a wage of 7s 6d each and they were paid for the entire year while their food allowance remained at just under one bushel per week. The two other ploughmen and the other full-time workers received 6s per year and as 'inferior labourers' they received a smaller food allowance. However, the increase in wages did not unduly reduce the profit that year since, as Bridbury points out, landlords were paying higher wages but they were also making more profit.³²

By 1358 the total number of full-time workers had increased but the highest wages fell; they all received 6s per year each but the senior ploughmen and the carter had larger food allowances. In 1364 all the workers received 6s per year with one bushel of corn per week and their wages remained at this level for the rest of the accounts. The average rate of pay of 6s per year seems to be the general standard, and manorial accounts for other areas of the country, eg for Cuxham in Oxfordshire³³ and for the estates of Leicester Abbey,³⁴ record similar levels of wages.

The shortage of labour in 1364 was countered by taking on temporary workers, raising the piece-work rates for threshing and winnowing, and by hiring workers to gather in the harvest, not for cash payment but for the tenth sheaf. Thus the labour shortage of 1364 did not result in higher wages for the full-time workers (as happened in 1352). The policy of demesne management in 1364 resulted in increased payments for temporary workers and the enforcement of customary labour services.

Building workers were paid at a daily rate and usually the rate applied to a craftsman with a workmate. In 1326 a thatcher and his mate were paid at the rate of 4d or 5d per day, which increased to 6d per day in 1350 'because of the shortage of men and because the work was done in summer', when presumably most of the labour force was concerned with the harvest. In 1352 a tiler and his assistant received 4d per day and in 1358 they received 5d per day. The highest rate of pay was reached in 1362 when John Gantron, the tiler, and his assistant were paid 7d per day but this may have been for emergency work caused by bad weather (see above) since the wage rates for the other craftsmen were not unduly high – the thatcher and his assistant were paid 5d per day and the carpenters each received 4d per day. After 1364 no more building work was carried out.

It appears that, on the whole, the rates of pay for craftsmen remained fairly steady with an average of about 5d per day for a workman and his assistant. Clearly wages increased immediately after the Black Death because of labour shortages but they appear to have dropped back afterwards to their former levels and then rose again in the 1360s. The legislation of Edward III set the wage rates for craftsmen at 3d per day for a workman and 1½d for his assistant; the wages at Tillingdown were, on the whole, slightly higher than the legal rates but not excessively high – they were lower than the average rates for building workers shown in the Phelps Brown Index.³⁵ The index gives the average wages of individual craftsmen, without an assistant, eg

1340–50	3d
1350–60	3d to 5d
1360–1402	5d

At Tillingdown the stability of the craftsmen's wages in comparison with the wages of the agricultural workers, suggests that either the demand for their work was not great or that much of the work could be left until labour was available and that it was generally management policy to leave building work until craftsmen were available at an economic rate. There is an interesting contrast with Bletchingley in 1326 when a tiler and his assistant were employed at the seemingly excessive rate of 8d per day to tile the bailiff's apartments in preparation for the arrival of Edward II, suggesting that the work was urgent and demanded a high rate of pay.

In contrast with the other craftsmen, the wages of the blacksmith fluctuated widely, since the value of his annual contract varied according to the number of draught animals on the demesne. In 1326 he received a wage of 4s 7d; in 1350 his contract was worth £1 14s 2d and by 1358, when he was responsible for maintaining three ploughs and for shoeing 27 animals it had risen to £2 8s. By the final year of the accounts in 1371 the value of his contract had fallen to £1 4s 6d 'because there were no horses'.

It is difficult to make comparisons between the wage rates of the craftsmen and the agricultural labourers since the craftsmen clearly commanded a higher daily wage rate, but their work was on short-term contracts and was probably seasonal; the agricultural workers received a lower daily rate of pay but, after the Black Death, they were employed

all year, had food allowances, and may have had small-holdings as well. One result of the Black Death was an overall rise in the wages of agricultural workers but it does not appear to have had a significant effect on the wages of craftsmen.

Income and expenses

The level of income from the demesne shows wide fluctuations caused by disease, bad weather, the instability of wages and prices and the amount of capital investment in the demesne. Tillingdown and its associated manors were not an isolated or self-sufficient group; they formed part of the Audley and Stafford estates in Surrey that were clustered around Bletchingley, and the proximity of Bletchingley affected the economy of Tillingdown since many of the products from Tillingdown were delivered to the reeves and bailiffs there. The village of Bletchingley lies about 4.5km south-west of Tillingdown; in the 14th century it was a parliamentary borough with a weekly market, an annual fair and a large manor-house which provided accommodation for the landlords and for various estate officials while they supervised the administration of the manors in East Surrey.

The Tillingdown accounts reveal the extent of the intervention of the officials in managing the demesne in an attempt to keep it running. In 1350, in the aftermath of the first onslaught of the Black Death, when the accounts also included Woldingham, the income fell, but there was investment in buildings and sheep-farming, and wool was the main source of income. In the remaining years of the accounts sales of wool ensured the income of the manors. The expenses of 1352 were high because the harvest was affected by bad weather; large amounts of corn had to be bought for both food and animal fodder, and money was spent on the upkeep of buildings, but the income from wool off-set these expenses. The accounts contain frequent references to inter-manorial activity, with products being transferred between manors, indicating that there was a high level of contact and co-operation between the various reeves and bailiffs.

In 1350, when the area was beginning to recover from the first outbreak of the disease, John Fromond, the Tonbridge receiver, was at Tillingdown, supervising, initiating new schemes, employing craftsmen at wages above the legal rate and organising the delivery of sheep. Notes in the margin of the account rolls stating 'witnessed by John Fromond' accompany unusual payments and transactions, indicating that his consent was necessary, as in 1352, when the cost of ploughs had doubled over the previous year. It seems likely that the impetus to venture into sheep-farming came from the central executive office at Tonbridge since only these officials would have the organising resources and skills to promote such new ventures. Similarly, following a second outbreak of disease, the decision to withdraw from demesne farming in 1366 was made 'on the orders of his lordship [Ralph, Lord Stafford] and his council' and was put into operation by the local officials. The importance of efficient management of estates has been emphasised by Hatcher in his study of the Duchy of Cornwall, where he shows how quickly the duchy officials reacted to the changes - he describes them as being extremely busy in the hectic years following the Black Death but he considers that, despite all the extra work, the duchy administration never allowed the disruption to degenerate into chaos.³⁶ Also, in her study of the accounts of the Battle Abbey estates, Searle stresses the importance of professional managers in maintaining income and she states that even in the 1350s a professional manager could make a demesne profitable, whereas manors without good managers failed to produce a reasonable income.³⁷ The Tillingdown account rolls reveal the extent of the dependence on the Tonbridge officials who acted to keep the organisation working.

By 1371 the whole of Tillingdown was leased to John Marden for an annual payment of £13 6s 8d; leasing all or part of the demesne seems to have been the strategy adopted by the majority of landlords to maintain income levels, as on the estates of Battle Abbey where short term leases were changed to life or long term leases³⁸ and, similarly, on the St Alban's Abbey estates, where most of the demesne was leased by the 1380s.³⁹ Leasing

allowed landlords to retain possession of the land without incurring the day-to-day management costs, but the Stafford officials did not at first withdraw completely from the administration of the manor since the Tonbridge receiver was still involved in the sale of stock but, by the beginning of the 15th century, Tillingdown appears on the Bletchingley accounts being leased for £8 per year with no involvement by the Stafford officials in its management. Thus in the 15th and 16th centuries Tillingdown provided a guaranteed annual income for the Staffords with no expenditure.

Conclusion

The Black Death was probably the greatest outside influence on the economy of the demesne. The disease reached Britain in the second half of 1348 and spread widely for about twelve months; it is not a coincidence that the Tillingdown accounts for 1350 began in January, in contrast to the other accounts which ran from Michaelmas to Michaelmas, suggesting that the manorial administration system was again in place by the beginning of 1350.

The account for 1350 reveals the short-term effects – a high mortality rate which reduced both the labour force and the market for products, a shortage of food and animal fodder, empty fields, and demands for higher wages. At this stage we can discern the intervention of the Stafford officials, attempting to restore the semblance of order in a difficult situation; they hired men at increased wages to cope with labour shortages but, at the same time, their actions were affected by state intervention which attempted to restrict wages and food allowances to the levels which were customary before the Black Death. State intervention was intended to protect landlords against demands for higher wages, but it was probably ineffective when labour was in short supply.

Certainly the combination of labour shortages and wage restrictions caused problems for the estate officials when the normal rules of supply and demand were out of control and customary tenants refused to carry out labour services without payment.

The devastation brought by the Black Death caused the officials to look at more effective ways of managing the demesne in order to spread the economic risk and reduce uncertainty. At Tillingdown there was investment in buildings to provide more storage for grain and money was invested in sheep, dairy-farming and rabbits. In the ten years following the Black Death there was a period of experimentation and diversification as means of initiating economic recovery and minimising the risk of bad harvests. The accounts reveal the extent of outside intervention – some measures brought success, others failed – but they show that management of the demesne was not static and that executives, reeves and bailiffs were expected to change working practices to make the most efficient use of resources. The work of these men in preventing a slide into chaos shows the adaptability of a society which was faced with a major catastrophe.

However, the accounts show that there was a further outbreak of the Black Death in 1361–2 which again resulted in high mortality rates. The response this time was a deliberate plan to withdraw from demesne farming and lease out the land for a fixed annual payment, eliminating risk and uncertainty for the landlord; this action also suggests that, despite outbreaks of disease and a shortage of full-time hired workers, there were enough people with sufficient capital to commit themselves to the payment of an annual sum.

The economic effects of the Black Death also caused social changes, although the effects of social change were likely to be less noticeable in manors like Tillingdown which was part of a much larger group of manors under the control of the Tonbridge officials. The organisation of overall control from Tonbridge meant that resources could be transferred between manors to minimise shortages. Nevertheless at Tillingdown the customary tenants rebelled against carrying out labour services and the agricultural workers received increased wages. The long-term effects of the Black Death at Tillingdown may be identified as the ending of labour services and the leasing of the demesne.

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